

NOAA COASTAL OCEAN PROGRAM (COP) DATA POLICY

November 24, 1999

I. Purpose

The overall purpose of the COP Data Policy is to facilitate full and open access to quality data for coastal ocean research. This data policy provides guidance for investigators managing environmental data collected under the auspices of COP. This policy covers the broad functional areas of (1) data collection and documentation, (2) data storage, exchange and archiving, and (3) data access and search. The COP Data Policy incorporates concepts found in the NOAA Policy for Managing Environmental Data and Information, U.S. GLOBEC Data Policy, and the Coastal Ocean Processes (CoOP) Data Policy.

COP's principal investigators must support this data policy as a condition of receiving funding.

II. Objectives

The COP Data Policy promotes (1) full and open sharing of data and other products of COP-sponsored research by all COP researchers; (2) entitling the investigator who collects the data to the fundamental benefits of the collected data set, derived models, etc., before the data are placed in the public domain; (3) selection of methods and equipment to ensure sufficient accuracy and precision to meet the project requirements for inter-comparisons and syntheses, (4) preservation of all data collected under COP sponsorship, including derived models, in an easily accessible archive with transfer ultimately to a permanent archive at a National Data Center.

III. Policies

1. COP encourages the no-cost, open, voluntary and ethical exchange of data or other COP-related information among investigators.

Publication of descriptive or interpretive results immediately and directly from the data is the privilege and responsibility of the investigators who collect the data. Prior to submission to a permanent data archive at a National Data Center, publication or presentation of any data derived by a co-participating investigator requires the permission of the scientist originating the data. Any scientist making substantial use of a data set should anticipate that the data collectors will be co-authors of published results. Originating investigators may not unreasonably impede use or publication of archived data, models, or model application. After the two (2)-year proprietary period has elapsed or the data has been submitted to a National Data Center for permanent archival, data will be in the public domain.

2. Methods and equipment used to take measurements and collect samples must be of sufficient accuracy and precision to yield data with quality adequate to meet the objectives of the COP field projects, associated modeling efforts, and larger-scale synthesis.

COP assigns responsibility for selection of methods, equipment, and calibration procedures to the principal investigators funded to make measurements. However, COP will consider the procedures that will be used to collect and process samples and data in the review process.

3. A data archive system will be established by each COP-sponsored project within six (6) months of the project start date for temporary repository of the data prior to their submittal to a permanent archive.

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The data archive system must facilitate the exchange of data and insure the long-term existence of the data set. The COP Project Manager (or a designated project Data Manager) will ensure the following data archive system conditions are met:

- data integrity and appropriate metadata are maintained;
- all users are provided access in a timely manner;
- and the data are transferred to a designated National Data Center (e.g., National Oceanographic Data Center) within two (2) years from the time of initial observations.

Each COP principal investigator will be responsible for quality control of his or her data before submission to the project data archive system. Data may be submitted to the designated data manager by mail or electronically. Submission and dissemination of data via the Internet is strongly encouraged.

The submitted data will include the actual measurements and supporting descriptive information (i.e., metadata) sufficient to permit its effective use by researchers not familiar with the original project or the particular instrument making the measurements. The NOAA/Federal Geographic Data Committee Metadata Standard Format shall be used to describe the data. Metadata consists of, but are not limited to, location, time, units, accuracy, precision, method of measurements or sampling, method and rate of sensor calibration and calibration data, investigator, reference to publications describing the data set, and data processing methods.

This policy also encourages the project archive to include selected models, and model products or results.

Measurements which do not involve manual analysis should be submitted to the project archive within six (6) months. All measurements, including metadata, should be submitted to a National Data Center for permanent archive and made available to the scientific community within two (2) years after collection.

4. Unclassified and/or unrestricted environmental data and information produced, sponsored, collected, or obtained by NOAA/COP are public property.

It is NOAA policy to make environmental data and information available under NOAA's stewardship based on exchange, loan, cost of dissemination, or at no cost in the interest of full and open access to data.